



**U.S. Army Corps  
of Engineers  
St. Paul District**

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**Public Affairs**

# Corps Facts

## Wild Rice River, Minnesota Feasibility Study

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### Project Background

The scope of the Wild Rice River Feasibility Study is based largely on the Wild Rice Watershed District's watershed management plan update, completed in May 28, 2003. That update used the Systems Approach Planning Process, or SAPP. The SAPP was a collaborative process, involving the input of citizens, federal and state agencies and other stakeholders, to prioritize water and related land resource problems, needs and opportunities with emphasis on flood damage reduction and natural resources restoration and enhancement. The SAPP made a preliminary assessment of individual and collective corrective measures for the Wild Rice basin and employed a screening process to focus on promising candidates.

The study is being conducted in two phases. Phase one will include collecting baseline data (topographic, economic, etc.), developing and upgrading hydraulic and hydrologic models and conducting a preliminary assessment of potential water resource projects for the area. Phase two will include conducting a more rigorous analysis of projects identified in phase one, developing detailed designs of those projects, developing an overall strategy to integrate and optimize these projects, determining the costs and economic and environmental benefits to assess project justification and preparing the necessary National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, documentation.

The Corps is partnering with the Wild Rice Watershed District, the non-federal sponsor, to complete the study. Both agencies signed an agreement to work together on Jan. 10, 2003. Phase one is scheduled for completion around June of 2005. The cost of the study is estimated at \$2.2 million, being shared equally between the federal government and the watershed district.

### Project Description

On the basis of the SAPP findings, it was determined that the feasibility study should tackle several problems and opportunities identified in the lower Wild Rice River. The following measures are being explored to address flood damage reduction and restore the basin's ecosystem:

- A gated diversion to shunt a portion of Wild Rice River summer floodwaters to the Red River, bypassing flood prone agricultural lands.
- Setback levees along a reach of the Wild Rice River from upstream of Ada, Minn., to the mouth of the gated diversion
- Restoration of a sinuous channel and riparian corridor within the setback levees in a reach that was channelized in the 1950s.
- Off-channel storage in six sections of frequently flooded land near the mouth of the diversion.
- A preliminary assessment of four potential floodwater storage opportunities on the Wild Rice River main stem and key sub watersheds.